



MUMBAI

American Center Bulletin

AUGUST

2006



AMERICA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

In commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, August 9, 2006 we dedicate this month's issue to the indigenous people of the United States.



Pottery



Naatsiilid Dancers



Maskettes



Dolls in traditional
apparel of Lakota tribe

Native Americans, or American Indians, were America's first people. Throughout America's history, they have been an integral part of the American character, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social and moral presence. That they are so integral a part of America is aptly described by the Squamish Chief Seattle, in a quote used for the 2004 Native American Heritage poster: "Humankind has not woven the web of life. But we are one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together, all things connect."

Tribal America has brought certain values and ideas that have become engrained in the American spirit: the knowledge that humans can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment; the understanding that people from very different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and traditions can come together to build a great country; and the awareness that diversity can be a source of strength rather than division.

From the Great Plains of the west to the eastern woodlands, and from the Northwest coast to the Southwest, America is blessed with rich Native American arts and crafts, language and literature, poetry and music, and dances and songs (see adjacent pictures for some examples), which have survived against all odds and adversities. Since the early days, they have played a vital role in shaping America, its vibrant and plural society, and defending its freedom and security. They served as the Code Talkers of World War II. Today, they serve in all branches of the American Armed Forces. The American government is committed to helping Native American cultures across the United States continue to flourish and to ensure quality education to every child and equal opportunity to realize their dreams. To promote awareness of and appreciation for the history and culture of America's first peoples, the United States has dedicated the month of November every year as *Native American Heritage Month*. The following section highlights some of the Native tribes of America's North, South, East and West.



Drums



War Shield



Hand Painting Art



Pincushion

(Continued on page 2)

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HOLIDAYS

August 15: Independence Day

The Tlingit of the Northwest Coast

The coastal Tlingit people live on the beaches and islands in the southeastern Alaska Panhandle, tucked between the tidewater and the rugged coastal mountains. Heavy rainfall creates a dense rainforest environment and a temperate climate more like Seattle than Anchorage. The numerous islands create a protected waterway called the Inland Passage, which permits travel and communication by water.

The Tlingit are the northernmost nation of the Northwest coast peoples, who range from southern Alaska to the coast of Oregon. These coastal groups created luxurious societies founded upon the abundant resources of the forest and the sea.

To this day, the livelihood of the Tlingit continues to be linked to the bounty of the natural world. The people maintain interests in both fishing and forestry, industries that have supported the Tlingit for centuries.

Tlingit women achieved fame for their finely-twined spruce root baskets decorated with dyed grass applied in a technique termed “false embroidery.” Wealthy basket collectors sought to augment their collections with Tlingit examples.



A WORD FROM THE CENTER

With all the press going to more high-profile UN resolutions such as UNSCR 1141 or UNSCR 687, we sometimes forget about resolutions such as UNGA 49/214, which established “International Day of the World’s Indigenous People” in 1994.

Some 350 million people – about six percent of the world’s population – identify as indigenous, comprising 5000 distinct communities in 72 countries, ranging from the Native Americans in the U.S. to the Jarawa of the Andaman Islands. Beyond their shared concerns over preserving their unique languages and cultural traditions, they bring highly disparate needs and challenges to their relationships with their non-indigenous governments.

The UN has previously proclaimed a decade of indigenous people, but I suspect the next decade – or more specifically, globalization – will sharpen the focus on these issues. If “indigenous” means having a nation-within-a-nation, then we now have subcultures that physically reside in one country, but telecommute and live the culture of another country: an exogenous people, if you will. Paradoxically, many of the concerns – such as cultural preservation and identification – are the same. As a minority concern becomes more of a majority one, I welcome the kind of discussion that balances identity with integration; that recognizes the commonalities between our world’s 350 million indigenous people and the 6.5 billion people indigenous to our world.

Ruth Bennett
Deputy Director

The Iroquois of the Northeast

The Eastern Woodlands, in the area that is presently New York State, gave rise to a confederation of six nations allied together in peace. Known as the Iroquois Confederacy, they call themselves *Haudenosaunee*, the People of the Longhouse.

The Iroquois occupied the land around the Great Lakes from southern Canada through much of present-day New York State; yet through trade, hunting, and warfare, their influence spread from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. At the end of the 17th century, there were perhaps 15,000 Iroquois living on one million square miles of territory.

The Eastern Woodlands include dense woods, mountains, hills, as well as rivers, lakes, and streams. This area has four seasons and plentiful rainfall and snow. The bounty of the land supports a wide variety of trees and other plants, mammals, birds, and fish.

The Iroquois people skillfully managed the natural bounty of the region by living in accordance with the seasons of the year. They hunted and fished, gathered nuts, berries, and other wild foods when these resources were available, and they cultivated productive crops, particularly corn, beans, and squash.

The Lakota of the Plains

The name Lakota means “allies” or “friends.” The Lakota, or Sioux, are seven groups of American Indians who banded together as members of the Seven Council Fires. They share a common culture and heritage, but are separate social and political entities.

The open rolling prairies and plains of North America were once part of the vast homeland of the Lakota people. The wide expanse of Lakota territory encompassed the region that today comprises the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Women sometimes expressed affection for men and children by beading every surface of their moccasins, even the soles. These moccasins were worn for special events such as weddings, honoring ceremonies, and burials.



The Hopi of the Southwest

Atop three high mesas in northern Arizona, Hopi sandstone villages merge seamlessly into their rocky foundations. Others of the 12 Hopi villages sit below on the valley floor. Here are some of the oldest continuously-occupied villages in North America.

Rainfall is scant, vegetation sparse, and seasonal temperatures fluctuate widely, yet the Hopi people have chosen to farm in this inhospitable environment.

Corn has sustained the Hopi people throughout their history, just as it sustains them throughout their lives. It is the first solid food fed to infants and sustains the spirits of the deceased as they journey into another world.

(Continued from page 2)

Native American Museums and Cultural Centers

There are innumerable tribes and ethnic groups among American Indians, and although each tribe is distinct from the other in cultural features such as language, garb and customs, there are certain commonalities which are shared by many tribes. The American landscape is dotted with museums and cultural centers dedicated to the preservation and promotion of awareness of arts and artifacts, culture and tradition, history, language and literature of various American Indian communities. We have listed a few of them with their web sites under the section “Notes from the AIRC” in the next column. A cursory glance through them is enough to explain why we stated earlier that America is blessed with such a rich Native American heritage.

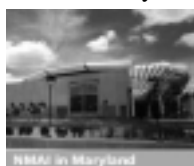
It is in honor and recognition of their contribution, and to preserve their heritage, that the Smithsonian Institution opened in September 2004, its 16th museum, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Situated between the Air and Space Museum and the Capitol in Washington, D.C., the museum’s extensive collections, assembled largely by George Gustav Heye (1874-1957), encompass a vast range of cultural material – including more than 800,000 works of extraordinary aesthetic, religious, and historical significance, as well as articles produced for everyday, utilitarian use. The collections span all major cultural areas of the Americas, representing virtually all tribes of the United States, most of those of Canada, and a significant number of cultures from Central and South America as well as the Caribbean.

Paula Gunn Allen, a renowned Native American writer and scholar of Laguna Pueblo/Metis and Sioux descent, and Ramona Sakiestewa, a Native American artist and designer of Hopi descent, helped design the NMAI, which comprises three facilities: one each in Washington, Maryland and New York.

The collections are distinguished by thousands of masterworks, including intricate wood and stone carvings and masks from the Northwest Coast of North America; elegantly painted and quilled hides, clothing, and feather bonnets from the North American Plains; pottery and basketry from the southwestern United States; 18th-century materials from the Great Lakes region; the C. B. Moore collection from the southeastern United States; and Navajo weavings illustrating a broad range of very early types. Works on paper and canvas include Plains ledger drawings as well as contemporary prints and paintings. The museum’s collections also include a substantial array of materials from the Caribbean, Mexico, Central, and South America, including a wide representation of archaeological objects from the Caribbean; ceramics from Costa Rica, central Mexico, and Peru; beautifully carved jade from the Olmec and Maya peoples; textiles and gold from the Andean cultures; and elaborate feather work from the people of Amazonia. To read more about the NMAI, log on to their web site <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>, and if you are planning a trip to the United States, include a visit to the NMAI at any of its three centers. We are sure you will enjoy the experience.



NMAI in Washington, DC



NMAI in Maryland



NMAI in New York

The American Center acknowledges the following sources in compiling the essay:

<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmnh/exhibits/north-south-east-west/lakota/>
www.nmai.si.edu

Sanjay Mehta, Editor

NOTES FROM THE AIRC

A Select Webliography on Native Americans

<http://www.bluecloud.org/dakota.html>
American Indian Culture Research Center

<http://www.indians.org/>
American Indian Heritage Foundation

<http://www.aihec.org/>
American Indian Higher Education Consortium

<http://www.eiteljorg.org/>
Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art

<http://www.firstgov.gov/Government/Tribal.shtml>
FirstGov.gov – Native Americans

<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/>
Index of Native American Resources on the Internet

<http://www.iaiancad.org/>
Institute of American Indian Arts

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/native_american.html
The Library of Congress – American Memory – Native American

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/cultural.htm#nat>
National Park Service – Cultural Groups – Native Americans

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/native-americans.html>
The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration – Indians/Native Americans

<http://www.ncai.org/>
National Congress of American Indians

<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/nations.html>
Native American Nations

<http://www.narf.org/>
Native American Rights Fund

<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/indians.html>
Native American Sites

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/>
National Museum of the American Indian

<http://www.tribalresourcecenter.org/>
National Tribal Justice Resource Center

<http://www.nnwo.org/>
Navajo Nation Washington Office

<http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/us/native.htm>
University of Colorado at Boulder – Native American Treaties and Information

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/indian.html>
U.S. Census Bureau – American Indian and Alaska Native Populations

Note: Internet sites included in this listing, other than those of the U.S. Government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

WELCOME



Ms. Elizabeth Kauffman is the new Director of the American Center in Mumbai. In a message she sent prior to her arrival, she wrote, "I look forward to joining the Public Affairs Section at the United States Consulate in Mumbai and to meeting the people in western India whose work and ideas mean so much to United States-India ties."

Liz brings experience from assignments in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Beijing, China; and, most recently, in Ottawa, Canada. She has also supported public diplomacy programs in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma as a Washington-based desk officer. She speaks French, Chinese, and Swahili. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Liz worked for MicroDesign International, Marketing Computer Peripherals and software; earned a Master's degree in Comparative Literature at the Pennsylvania State University, with special interest in oral epics; taught English as a second language and researched epics of southern Cameroun at the University of Yaoundé. She enjoys nature walks, music, and learning about the history of humanity around the globe. Liz's spouse, John Kauffman (author of 12 books on designing advanced web sites), high school-age son, and college-age daughter also look forward to learning and meeting new friends in western India.

We welcome Liz Kauffman to Mumbai.

MUMBAI MONDAYS

A Discussion on

American Youth in Overseas Volunteering Projects led by Vice Consuls Sarah Grow and Darion Akins

Monday, August 21

American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

Every year, thousands of young Americans choose to postpone lucrative career options for a few years, and instead go abroad and work for volunteer organizations or NGOs. One of the larger ones, the Peace Corps, has been in operation for more than 35 years and has projects all over the world. Sarah Grow and Darion Akins will share their experiences working overseas as volunteers: Mr. Akins in Africa with the Peace Corps, and Ms. Grow in Bosnia with Physicians for Human Rights.

Sarah Grow is on her first tour with the State Department. Before working in Mumbai, she worked in Bogota, Colombia; Tuzla, Bosnia; and Istanbul, Turkey; for a variety of NGOs and companies. She has a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University.

Darion Akins hails from Oklahoma, but calls Texas home. Immediately prior to joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Akins was Regional Coordinator for Peace Corps' Southwest Region. He also worked as a high school history and Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) instructor, and for the Peace Corps in Zambia, first as a Community Development Volunteer and then as Provincial Coordinator for the Eastern Province. Mr. Akins' first tour with the State Department was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as a Consular Officer. He is presently the General Services Officer (business operations). He speaks German, Chi Nyanja, Chi Chewa, and some Japanese.

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FILMS THIS MONTH

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Thursday, August 10

The Last of the Mohicans
(1992, color, 112 mins)

American Center Auditorium

3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Friday, August 18

Hawaii (1966, color, 188 mins)

American Center Auditorium

2:45 and 6:30 p.m.

Friday, August 25

Dances with Wolves (1990, color, 181 mins)

American Center Auditorium

3:00 and 6:30 p.m.



The American wilderness of the 1750s is the setting for director/co-scripter Michael Mann's grand adaptation of the James Fenimore Cooper adventure classic. Daniel Day-Lewis stars as frontier scout Hawkeye, defending a band of British settlers from attack during the French and Indian wars. *The Last of the Mohicans* costars Madeleine Stowe, Wes Studi and Russell Means.

Hawaii is a lush and atmospheric epic based on the James A. Michener novel chronicling the efforts of missionaries to bring "civilization" to the islanders in the 1820s. The stellar cast includes Julie Andrews, Max Von Sydow, Richard Harris, Gene Hackman, Jocelyn Lagarde and Carroll O'Connor.



Winner of seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, this stirring, visually enthralling Western epic is set on the Dakota plains of the 1860s. Director/star Kevin Costner is an Army officer who is assigned to a remote post where he befriends a tribe of Sioux Indians, whom he discovers are more civilized than his own people. *Dances With Wolves* costars Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene and Rodney A. Grant.

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

ETHNICITY IN AMERICA: THE INFLUENCE OF IMMIGRANTS ON AMERICAN CULTURE AND POLITICS

by

PROF. RICHARD PELLIS

The University of Texas at Austin

Richard Pellis is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of three books: *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years*; *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s*; and *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II*. He is currently at work on the book *From Modernism to the Movies: The Globalization of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*. He has held six Fulbright senior lectureships and chairs, as well as other visiting professorships, at universities in The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Finland, Brazil, Australia, and Indonesia.

Monday, August 28

American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring the envelope containing this issue of the bulletin for admission (maximum two persons). The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.